



STATE
SENATOR
Wayne Kuipers
30TH SENATE DISTRICT E-MAIL UPDATE



Senators Kuipers, Van Woerkom to Announce Pier-Safety Legislation in Press Conference

Senators Wayne Kuipers and Gerald Van Woerkom, together with the Pier Safety Task Force, Grand Haven Public Safety, and the Muskegon County Health Department, will be holding a news conference announcing legislation to increase safety on piers and crack down on the theft of life preservers placed on piers. This event will take place Monday, October 17, 2005 at 2:30 p.m. at the Grand Haven Chamber of Commerce, One South Harbor Drive in Grand Haven, Michigan. Concerned about the number of pier-related deaths in Michigan, citizens, local officials, and state lawmakers want to raise awareness about pier safety and stop the theft of life preservers from piers. The senators will announce safety legislation they are introducing and discuss ways of educating young people about how to be safe on piers.

Automotive 'Black Boxes' and Safeguarding Privacy

Legislation is being drafted in the Senate to help ease the privacy concerns of Michigan motorists from “black boxes” being installed in new vehicles that record speed, braking and seat belt usage. Known as event data recorders, the devices can also track engine revolutions per minute and other information that can be used to understand why accidents occur. The proposed legislation would amend state law to prohibit the discovery of information retained in event data recorders for use in civil proceedings, criminal proceedings, or to be used to establish insurance rates. According to the Detroit News, about two-thirds of new vehicles, including those built by General Motors Corp. and Ford Motor Co., come equipped with event data recorders. These “black boxes” can tell tales even after a car has been totaled. Legislation will be introduced in the coming weeks.

Protecting Food Processors from Frivolous Lawsuits

Legislation amending the Michigan Agricultural Processing Act to help ensure that food processors are protected from frivolous lawsuits passed the Michigan Senate unanimously. If signed into law, Senate Bills 668 and 669 would close a liability loophole for food processors operating in compliance with specified laws. Senate Bill 669 will require complainants to exhaust the administrative complaint process regarding supposed violations before taking a complaint to court. The language also specifies that a court can not proceed with action until a final determination is made by the Michigan Department of Agriculture. A 1998 law provides immunity from nuisance lawsuits for food processors that operate according to generally accepted processing practices. Lawsuits can and have been filed against food processors because of the loophole in current law. As part of the Republican *New Economy Plan*, the legislation is designed to help protect Michigan jobs. Michigan has 882 food and beverage establishments that employ approximately 45,000 people throughout the state. SBs 668 and 669 now head to the House of Representatives for consideration.